

Tonto Natural Bridge Report

Monday, May 16, 2022

Leader: Dan Bohlmann

When we first arrived we circled around the visitor's center with all the green grass, garden, bushes and trees. We saw both Kingbirds (Cassin's and Western) in the trees, and an Ash-throated Flycatcher and a Say's Phoebe. The visitor center had humming bird feeders with three types - Black-chinned, Anna's and Broad-tailed. From the porch we spotted House Finches, Black-headed Grosbeak, Northern Mockingbird, Western Scrub Jays, and nesting Barn Swallows on the eaves of the porch. We then went to the southern entrance to the bridge which is more like a tunnel. There were lots of White-throated Swifts, Violet-green, Cliff and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, flying in and out of the tunnel to their nests. We heard a Lucy's and Yellow Warbler on the trek to the north end of the tunnel.

We were on the west side overlook when we heard the Canyon Wren do his up and down the scales song. Below us in the canyon we saw a Summer Tanager flying from tree to tree. From this viewpoint you can see streaks of travertine coming down on the opposite side of the canyon. We then walked over to the east side of the canyon where you could see a Raven's nest up on the canyon wall that had a pine tree's worth of sticks in it. From there we heard a Cassin's Vireo calling in the canyon. Then a female Hepatic Tanager showed up. Some of us took a set of stairs down into the canyon to see the waterfall that trickles down the canyon wall producing a wet paradise of ferns and columbines. It's also 20 degrees cooler down there but surprisingly there were no birds.

We realized that there was a strange growling sound among us so we decided it was time for lunch. On the way to the picnic table we had a male and female Cardinal chase by. We also heard a Buick's Wren and an imitator Spotted Towhee. Somewhere in our wanderings we also saw a Raven, Turkey Vulture, Mourning Dove and Robin. So we had 29 species that gave us the honor of their presence.